



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **FEDERAL SOFTWARE PIRACY INVESTIGATION LEADS TO PROSECUTION OF PORTLAND MAN**

PORTLAND- Paula D. Silsby, United States Attorney for the District of Maine, and Kevin J. O'Connor, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced the Kurt M. Brink, 25, a resident of Portland, pleaded guilty today to conspiring to commit criminal copyright infringement.

According to documents filed with the court, Brink was a participant in the "warez scene" - an underground online community comprised of individuals and organized groups who use the Internet to engage in the large-scale, illegal distribution of copyrighted software. In the warez scene, certain participants (known as "suppliers") obtain access to copyrighted software, video games, DVD movies, and MP3 music files, often before those titles are even available to the general public. Other participants (known as "crackers") then use their technical skills to circumvent or "crack" the digital copyright protections. Yet others (known as "couriers") distribute the pirated software to various file servers on the Internet for others to access, reproduce, and further distribute.

"Stealing the intellectual property of others is no different from any other form of thievery," said U.S. Attorneys Silsby and O'Connor in a joint statement. "It is a priority of our offices and the Department of Justice to protect the intellectual property rights of our nation's inventors and creators."

This case is part of Operation Safehaven, a 15-month investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") and the ICE Cyber Crimes Center, in conjunction with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut and the Department of Justice, Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section ("CCIPS"). Operation Safehaven culminated in April 2003 with the simultaneous execution of over twenty search warrants nationwide, resulting in the seizure of thousands of pirated CDs and DVDs, plus dozens of computers and servers, including the largest warez site ever seized in the United States to date.

When sentenced by United States District Judge D. Brock Hornby, Brink faces a possible punishment of up to five years imprisonment, three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*